

Big Fish Phantom Shifts

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Phantom shifts are often kind of "in the way" for a lot of people. Wings clipping through or bumping into walls. Antlers or horns bonking things. Tails being annoying to deal with when faced with the back of a chair... You get it. I have... a definite problem with this in a very similar way, but it's different than any of the guys in my system with phantom shifts. Namely because I'm a very fucking long fish, made for open water.

My tail at its shortest? Easily 3x the height of my body, if not more. It replaces my legs when I get a phantom shift and I definitely rely on using my cane more in those moments because my legs feel a lot less "real" than they should, and I always feel at more risk of tripping or taking a step wrong. I can still feel my human legs, sure, but they kind of become an afterthought and less present in my mind. Kind of dissociated, less a part of *me* and more a part of... Something else.

I don't directly feel every inch of my phantom tail though either--more like... There's a sense of there *should* be a sensation there. I don't feel much aside from where it should connect and curve away from my human body--everything else is a lot less physical. The sense of "this should have feeling" means I don't get hurt or any real direct sensation from it interacting or not fitting in physical objects properly, but it's still a sense of mental discomfort. A sense of "I shouldn't be able to fit here", or a sense of "this should be kinda painful". If I'm in a space where I can't make a logical conclusion to where my tail could possibly fit in a comfortable way, it's like a nagging at the back of my brain telling me to move. Even though I can't physically feel where my tail is or that it would be uncomfortable, my brain *knows* I shouldn't be able to be in whatever position it is that I'm currently in, and urges me to get to somewhere more comfortable ASAP.

Even though it doesn't cause much physical distress, the tail being so long makes it incredibly annoying when dealing with shifts in the body and performing daily tasks. Walking around outside? Oops, that car just ran over my tail, that should *probably* hurt. That guy is standing in it, okay sure. It doesn't fit into the car I'm in and my brain can't figure out what to do with that information.

I try to do things in my house? The thing hardly fits in my room, let alone on my bed. Turning around corners can be annoying because my brain will scream about how I'm turning in a way that would hurt my tail. Sitting on a couch is the same issue as the bed. Oops, the dog just walked up and fell asleep where my tail should be, that's bound to have some sort of discomfort.

It's overall not the biggest issue, it's manageable, but it's a weird psychological thing that bugs me sometimes. I'm glad I don't have physical sensation in it because that would be impossible to manage, but having the mental push of "this isn't right, your tail can't fit here" still is... An Experience to have. Most other people in my system can feel a large portion of their phantom limbs, but it honestly makes sense as to why I can't feel mine in the same way--I just literally wouldn't fit in human society. In both of my forms (vast/hunt leviathan and Sebastian Solace), my body is made for open water, not houses, stores or cars.